



# THE VOICE

Vol. LII, Issue III

## The H2-H3 Merger

by Sonya Voloboi

Although we all lose our voice in the same gym during pep rally and sweat in the same cafeteria for school dances, in the classroom Chelmsford High is deeply divided. For most subjects, our school offers four levels: AP, Honors, H2 and H3 or unranked.

While these levels were originally created to allow each student the flexibility of choosing an appropriate speed and difficulty, students are getting increasingly locked into one level. Since people have a tendency of learning best when surrounded by peers who challenge them, this trend of remaining at one level is increasingly problematic when looking at students taking predominantly H3 classes. In an attempt to “stretch” these students, CHS will be combining H2 and H3 classes into one “College Prep” or CP level. This change will go into effect next year and will affect all subjects but math in which a level 3 will continue to exist .

This decision is prompted by a cocktail of educational philosophy and state mandates.

For years, CHS has been trying to close the achievement gap of Level 3 students, many of whom the administration believes have not been given the opportunity to reach their full potential within the lower class. “Students learn from diversity of skills and backgrounds in the classroom,” Mr. Murray states in the January 28th school committee meeting, reaffirming his belief that combining the H2 and H3 levels will be the antidote to the achievement discrepancy currently facing the school. In addition to the philosophy of growth, CHS is also being pushed into this change by state mandates for accommodations required for sub-separate classrooms, classes with 50% or more students with IEPs. Many H3 classes are currently considered sub-separate and future projections for the degree of assistance required by these classes show that CHS will soon fail to meet state requirements if we maintain the current model. This leaves the

school with three options:

- 1.Create more H3 classes**
- 2.Hire more teachers**
- 3.Combine H2 and H3**

Since the first two options are out of the realm of financial possibility for Chelmsford, CHS is being forced into option three. Mr. Murray maintains a positive outlook on the merger saying that he doesn’t “philosophically believe in H3” and that the new program will help more students succeed and be academically challenged.

The primary concern accompanying this change, voiced by students and teachers alike, is that the new CP level classes will go at a speed which is simultaneously too fast for

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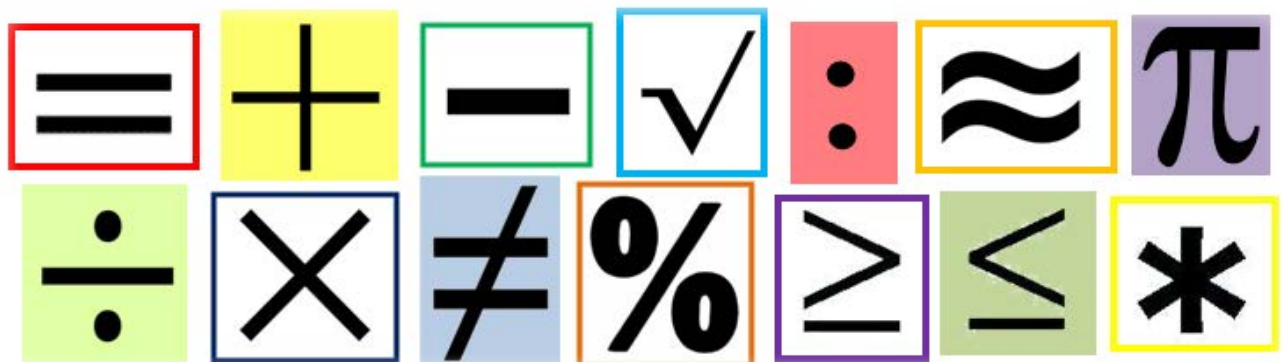
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the ex-H3 student and too slow for the ex-H2 student. Some teachers who have experience with all levels remain skeptical about the merge, wondering if the students moving up from a lower level will be appropriately supported within this change. While the CP class will move a little faster than the H3 level, the same support will be given to students moving up, whether it be in the form of coteaching, study skills or one on one support. As Dr. Beyranevand, the mathematics department coordinator, says, “students put in a class where they are challenged more, with the supports that are in place, will be able to rise up to the challenge and perform at a higher level”. One of the reasons for the current achievement gap faced by H3 students is the pace of instruction cannot keep up with the requirement pace of assessments; the class does not get to all of the required material by the end of the year. By combining levels, CP classes will complete the curriculum at a faster pace but with all the support necessary for students from H3 classes to succeed.

While CP will face curriculum changes from H2 classes, through differentiated instruction teachers will modify the pace and depth of content to match the level of each student. This method is similar to what’s currently being implemented at the middle and elementary level where heterogeneous classes force teachers to adapt by both giving extra help to the struggling students and ensuring the excelling students are appropriately challenged. “While it’s going to be an adjustment curriculum wise, it’s not going to be something that students or teachers are unfamiliar with,” Mr. Murray states, saying that neither the H2 nor the H3 student should be concerned about their ability to succeed in a CP class. But what exactly is differentiated learning? Is it a change in the assessment and workload of a class or simply an adjustment of the speed and style of teaching? Yes. Differentiated learning is primarily focused on “stretching” each student to their appropriate level. This can take the form of flexible grouping, dividing the class into sections of similar ability, or varying levels of assessment and additional work. Teachers are currently undergoing training for differentiated learning and members of the math department will meet over the summer to adjust the syllabus and plan for the changes facing us next year.

While CP level classes will surely be an adjustment to get used to, CHS is actually one of the last districts in the area to still have four levels (H3, H2, Honors, AP). In Tewksbury, the program was implemented under similar state mandated pressures and in just a few years the achievement gap at their highschool showed significant decrease. In math, Dr. Beyronevand found that all but one school district have already adopted the new model of three as opposed to four levels. CHS is not adapting to some revolutionary change, we are simply keeping up with the trend of the towns around us. As with any initiative, the first few transition years are sure to be a challenge as teachers and students alike adjust to a more heterogeneous classroom. Ultimately, the CP level is an inevitable evolution in the evolution of CHS class division. Hopefully this redesign will help make our high school into a more united community where every student is able to realize their full potential for academic success.



# Mommy, Am I Gonna Get Drafted?

by Emily Rice

Amidst recent stirrups within the global and political climate of the world, American teenagers are buzzing with trepidation over whether or not they'll be spared from this impending "World War III" that's threatening to strip them from their comfort and security. Meanwhile, Australian wildlife and Indonesian lands are swallowed by the insatiable appetite of planet Earth, sweeping all that's in her path into her beckoning stomach of destruction. Putting all of that aside; as a senior, nearly every class I've been in has had at least one student raise the question in a low and trembling whisper, "wait, do you think we'll get drafted?"

The curiosity is certainly mutual, as I myself have even wondered this very question. However, in order to get a plausible answer, it's important to set up some necessary context. Cue the brief history lesson:

The draft, formally known as "conscription," is the mandatory enlistment into the U.S. army. Conscription was instituted in America during the Civil War when Congress passed the Civil War Mandatory Draft Act of 1863.

The Union Army wanted young, strapping lads ranging from 20-45 years old. The draft ensued into World War II, where this time, the age was lowered to 18-37 years old. This would stay roughly the same during the Viet-

nam War, arguably America's most famous draft. With the mandated registration pool of 27 million, 2.2 million would be thrown into Southeastern communist turmoil. To top it all off, American conscription was even abolished after 1973, due to the overwhelming amount of opposition Congress faced during the Vietnam War. Since then, the country has remained a volunteer-based service. Another draft would have to be passed by Congress, with a law signed off by the President, and plush political support to back it all up. Plus, contemporary factors like race and gender should be taken into consideration, too. African Americans were included in the draft beginning in 1943, whereas women were and still remain excluded. Continuing that notion, President Trump banned the enlistment of transgender people into the army in April, 2019. All of this could potentially change should there be another draft, should there even be a "World War III."

So, young, troubled reader: will you be drafted? Honestly, most likely not. Signing up for Selective Services does make you susceptible to a potential draft, but the likelihood of that being implemented is probably unnecessary. With 1.3 million troops, we're ranked third highest in the world; 200,000 actively deployed in more than 170 countries. Plus, President Trump has expressed an interest in symbolizing America's power through military equipment as opposed to an expanding army. Having said that, what I think we should be more worried about is a nuclear arms race.

The President released the Trump Administration's Missile Defense Review, a 108-page strategy document that could potentially be interpreted as a threat by foreign forces. This game of "cat and mouse" puts us as a nation at stake to dangerous hostility that makes nuclear arms analysts nervous.

Our main arsenal concerns lie within North Korea, China, Russia, and Iran. Trump has announced plans to create "space-based sensors and interceptors that could stop missiles before they reach the United States" (Time, 2 January 2020, p. 1). This sounds promising, but missile defense focused in outer space only promotes a space race between the U.S., Russia, and China to see who can develop the best and most strategic weapons first. Defense Secretary William Perry said, "When the U.S. builds bigger and better missile defense forces, it stimulates Russia to respond with bigger and better offensive forces." It will all certainly come at a cost as well. Perry worries that the development of these weapons using federal money would decrease, not increase, our security.



While that's not any less scary, at least you may rest easily knowing that it's not a draft that could ruin your future but, rather, an atomic explosion. In the meantime, work on keeping a positive attitude for the new decade and don't forget to stay hydrated. Make sure you tell someone you love them, and live your life to the fullest. Don't forget, young reader: the fate of America lies within your hands. Vote in the next election if you're able, and help shape the kind of place you want to live in.

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## Jerry's Game Review

by Michael O'Connor and Jerry Su

The Game everyone's talking about, "b". In this exciting new take on the flight simulation genre, you play as a family-friendly bee. Parents will be delighted to know that their children will not be improving their spatial awareness skills by flying a violence-promoting military warplane or a civilian airliner, which, according to the TSA, "encourages domestic terrorist sentiment". The relaxing, undulating green

grassy meadows, the multipolygonic blades waving in the simulated breeze, relaxing atmospheric ("chill") music allowing players to "vibe"(Schäfer, 2013). This game also has an educational aspect, allowing the younger subset of players to gain a fundamental understanding of astronomy (reaching celestial bodies such as the sun and moon being the goal of the game), and Aristotelian motion, the constraints of whom enable the bee to fly

in-game. Overall, highly recommended for the whole

family! For those worried about the limitations of their low-spec hardware on the simulation of real-world environments, there is no need to worry. The game is incredibly well optimized, with another reviewer even commenting that it "Runs better than COD MW or RDR2". It is also free on the app store.



# Chelmsford In Tune: A Night of Musical Wonder

by Hetil Patel

On January 17th, hundreds of enthusiastic parents, students, and faculty entered the Performing Arts Center (PAC) for a night of musical wonder which is Chelmsford In Tune. In Tune is an annual event that allows students and faculty of Chelmsford High School to showcase their musical talents. This event is sponsored by LIME (Leadership In Motion Everywhere), an after-school leadership and volunteer club advised by Mr. Bartos. LIME donated a portion of the proceeds from this event to the World Wildlife Fund and saved the rest for a future fundraising event, the 24-Hour Relay.

The first act of the night was “Here Comes the Sun” by The Beatles, performed by our very own English teacher, Steven Courtemanche, and Pete Vailancourt, a member of Mr. Courtamche’s band, The Middlemen. Many CHS students took part in the event, including Juhi Lalwani, Emily Rice, Julia Blair performing “Perfect” by Ed Sheeran, “Passionfruit” by Drake, and “Perfect Day” by Lou Reed (respectively). The iconic duo who have performed a song at In Tune every year, Mr. Shea and Mrs. Arena, chose to sing “Overkill” by Men at Work. Madame Gadbois performed “Nothing More” by The Alternating Roots accompanied by Mr. Sanders. Also, Tabor Morin, Jacob Deflemic and Jenna Ward performed as a last-minute replacement for Madame Chagnon. In a change of pace from other more emotionally heavy acts of the night such as “Bruises” by Lewis Capaldi, Jenna Ward sang “White Flag” by Joseph. There was no shortage of performances from teachers and one of them was our Physics teacher, Mr. Sousa, performing “Love Will Last” by Rush. He was originally going to sing “If I Had Been a Better Man” by Colin Hay, but due to the recent bushfires in Australia, he decided to pay homage to the Australian band Rush. Additionally, Nathan Morrissey accompanied many singers as he played the piano, making this the first year In Tune did not use any karaoke soundtracks! The night came to a close just as it had started, with a performance by Mr. Courtemanche.

Of course, this is just a selection of a few of the many talented acts from that night. All in all, Chelmsford In Tune was a major success, with the highest audience attended and a profit of 1,200 dollars, which was donated to the World Wildlife Fund. The Voice and Chelmsford High are eagerly anticipating next year's show!



*The Glue Factory: (left to right) Zach Williams, Michael O'Connor, Christian Barbosa, Emily Rice, San Kim*



## Valentines Day Dance

Roshni Patel and Sakshi Mantripragada

Do you like cafe dances? Sadly there hasn't been any since the Tikki Turnup keeps getting canceled! But we have great news for you on February 8th, the class of 2023 class reps has planned a Valentine's Day dance. It will be held in Cafe 1 and there will be a free photo booth inside. Sounds exciting! Madame Gadbois and Ms. Schulman are our class advisors and have been working hard to plan this dance with us. Ms. Schulman gave us the idea to get a photo booth because it has never been done before. Madame Gadbois gave us the idea of doing this dance and encouraged us to come up with ideas for this event. Overall, we hope you come to the first dance since the Tundra Tango and have a great time taking pictures in our photo booth and dancing with your friends.

**\*\*Unfortunately, the Valentine's Dance was canceled**

## Red

by Anonymous

It's summer.

A hand brushes over the foliage, hesitantly, drawing back at every small lump that could be mistaken for an insect. There's chatter in the garden, idle talks with idle purpose. The leaves ignore this, continuing to sway along to the melody of the breeze. They're soft and waxy, the fingers gently caressing them a testimony to that fact. The pad of an index finger scrapes down a thorn, wondering if blood would dye the stem crimson red as well. There's a lingering sense of disappointment when all it does is leave a white mark against the skin which quickly began to fade away.

It's hot.

The brim of a snapback does little to shade vision from the sun. The flowers seem to stretch on, stippled dots amidst a sea of green green green. There's red, pink, white, and yellow? The first time seeing or hearing of a yellow rose. What about red was so romantic, what about the concept of a rose itself was so passionate? Did it come from the way the petals swirled and flared out, yet seemed so modestly self contained? Was it the color, the vivid hues gently rubbed into velvet flakes? Or was it the thorns, so protective yet not sharp enough to scar, to leave behind a proof of existence before inevitably withering away, unless the other party pressed and pressed until the red petals mixed with the dark crimson of life. It seemed all too whimsical.

The finger pricked.

It's cold.



# Whats your sign?

by Kylie Jacobs



**Aries: May 21st-April 19th**, The Ram, Passionate, motivated and confident leader who builds community with their cheerful disposition and relentless determination. When it comes to relationships, Aries seem to take their time when falling in love.

**Taurus: April 20th-May 20th**, The Bull. Highly determined, honest, and sarcastic and when it comes to love they are very impulsive and loyal and they are very caring to their partners. But sometimes they can be aggressive and stubborn.

**Gemini: May 21st-June 20th**, The Twins. Loyal, smart, and humorous. Gemini's are scared of commitment and they can hardly stay in one. They get bored very easily and can quickly move on.

**Cancer: June 21st-July 22nd**, The Crab. Highly intuitive, and their psychic abilities manifest in tangible spaces. They can easily pick up energy in a room. As previously stated Cancers are highly intuitive and know and keep your secrets. They want to be as close as those they love as possible.

**Leo: July 23rd-August 22nd**, The Lion. Enthusiastic, passionate, generous and confident. Once in love or committed Leo's are stubbornly loyal and will do anything to protect and encourage their partner. they will blossom and share themselves openly with their partner.

**Virgo: August 23rd-September 22nd**, The Virgin. Practical, responsible, caring. Their modesty and humility is what draws people to them. They are extremely caring and reliable. They enjoy listening to what their partner has to say and helping them through hard times.

**Libra: September 23rd-October 22nd**, The Scales. Charming, peace-keepers, fun, and flirty. Libras are romantics and they thrive for a meaningful relationship They are known to be the most compatible signs.

**Scorpio: October 23rd-November 21st**, The Scorpion. Emotional, imaginative and intense. Love, trust and loyalty are things that they give freely Scorpios are never wishy washy and are very much "all or nothing", in love.

**Sagittarius: November 22nd-December 21st**, The Archer. Honest, adventurous, optimistic, and independent. Aggressively fun, this sign usually moves full speed ahead once they have their love target 'locked'. They enjoy a challenge and are especially attracted to confident outgoing partners.

**Capricorn: December 22nd-January 19th**, The Goat. Ambitious, persistent, realistic, and sensitive. Unlike many signs, Capricorns aren't likely to fall hard and fast, usually preferring to fall into "friendship" first. Capricorns can be stubborn and this serves them well as they generally succeed in attaining what they want. Slow and steady is their way in the romance department.

**Aquarius: January 20th-February 18th**, The Water Bear. Assertive, easy going, unique. An Aquarius is often slow to commit, needing to be sure of both the mental connection. Their love for life and continual pursuit of spice makes them very entertaining to love.

**Pisces: February 19th-March 20th**, The Fishes. Empathetic, gentle, and patient. Pisces are the most emotional of all the signs. Extremely intuitive and sensitive, they seek romantic love and need a soulmate more than most. This can be very beautiful for the partner of a Pisces, as their deep love and empathy makes for a very spiritual bond.



## *Carnation Sale*

*by Hetil Patel*



*Do you care about anyone in your life? Key Club is doing its annual carnation sale fundraiser to raise money for the Great Lowell Food Bank. The Food Bank provides free meals to families around the Merrimack Valley, every dollar donated can buy three meals for someone in need this winter. There will be a table outside all three lunches where members of Key Club will be selling carnation flowers with heart-shaped tags that the buyer can personalize for the receiver.*

*The flower and note will be delivered to the recipient on Valentine's day. You can buy a carnation for a friend, significant other, or a teacher. The flowers are \$2.00 and all proceeds will be donated! Please make sure to buy a carnation and if you have any questions please contact Ms. Durkin in room 333!*

## Should We Change the GPA Scale?

by Matt Waterman and Sonya Voloboi

*Please note this is an editorial and is meant to simply state opinions and start a conversation. We do not know if the GPA scale is going to be changed next year.*

### **Yes, Change It:**

As grade-induced depression rolls around for everyone, many end up checking their GPA every time a class is posted, only to experience confusion at the scale. H2 classes that are twice as difficult as their honors counterparts, ten-point differences between grades of students with different teachers enrolled in the same class, and moving from Honors to AP, cutting one's grade in half for adding 0.2 to the scale; it seems that nearly no one is content with the system we have now. It doesn't have to be this way. I believe that the ideal system is scaling GPA by the difficulty of each specific class, giving the scale the flexibility that it deserves.

There are many issues with the current system, but the main one is that students have an incentive to take easier classes, sacrificing their academic rigor for a higher number in X2. If someone could get a 98 in an H2 class, but they could only manage an 88 in an honors-level class, in consideration of their GPA, they're better off taking the H2 class. Students are penalized by the almost undetectable difference in GPA for classes that are worlds apart in difficulty. Why are we discouraging students from taking higher ranking classes? Why not just increase the difference between the levels? Put H2/H3 (which will be the same) at 4, honors at 4.5, and AP at 5; though this is a step in the right direction, it's mostly a lateral one.

While this will alleviate the issue of level discrepancies, we will still have classes in almost every department that are taught by multiple teachers, again with large gaps between their grades. If a student is going to put effort into a class, it can sometimes come down to a roll of the dice whether they get a 3.2 or a 4.2, and whether they have ten minutes or two hours of homework a night. This is simply not fair.

In addition, massive gaps between course difficulty at the same level still present themselves. It is hard to deny that a class like AP Chem, Bio, or Physics does not compare in workload or relative difficulty to an AP Language or History class. If you're looking to maximize your GPA - which many academically driven students are - you're best off dropping your science classes. However if these science courses were accompanied by a 0.1 or 0.2 GPA bonus, you might be better off giving it your all.

I don't think this system will be perfect, but I do think it makes significant leaps. Even the superintendents agree



that we should reward students for ambition, rather than playing the numbers game. Grade inflation, inconsistencies, and "unfair" classes will be balanced. Even if colleges reweight your GPA, students will still be incentivized to take harder classes. Teachers may skew the difficulty of their classes as a result, and colleges might be a little puzzled at your transcript, but by and large, I think that this is the money move

### **No, Keep It As Is**

While the current scale does carry certain discrepancies, changing it in accordance to Matt's plan would be an administrative nightmare. There is no certain way of determining every class' individual difficulty: many classes have only one block per year or vary in their curriculum from one year to the next. There is no objective measure of difficulty, the average grade in a class is not indicative of personal difficulty and will give an unfair advantage to students who are excelling at science and math. The number of hours that it requires me to do well in a calculus class is less than I spend working on my English class essays. By implementing Matt's scale I will have an unfair GPA boost. A class-specific scale will inflate the GPA of STEM centered students while undermining the effort required to do well in a humanities class. In the same way that the current system might discourage enrollment in higher-level science classes, a modified system will deter humanities students from filling their schedules with higher-level English and social studies courses.

This system will also create an awkward and unproductive environment for teachers whose class difficulty will constantly be questioned. This will allow teachers to make a class unreasonably hard under the excuse of a higher ranking or discourage students from taking art electives generally considered "easy". Since colleges will recalculate GPA based simply on the numeric grades and the level -- not the CHS specific difficulty -- the new system will be messy at best for upperclassmen. The backdrop of college makes any issue with our current GPA system essentially meaningless, CHS doesn't report rank and there is little significance to the number in x2. Students take the level of class at which they feel appropriately challenged, GPA should not take reign of a decision based on every individual's personal academic goals and interests.

While the current scale might not be perfectly fair for every student, it approaches fairness when expanding our focus to the school as a whole. Over my four years at CHS I have taken H2 classes that were on par with AP and AP classes easier than H2 ones. Rather than go through the impossible task of assigning a specific value to each class, let's embrace Occam's razor: the simplest decision is usually the right one.

**Yes, it should  
be changed**

**No, it should  
NOT be changed**

Remove Incentive to Take Easy Classes	Penalized for struggling in a subject
Equitable Scaling for Class Level	No objective measure of "hardness"
As simple as changing one number in X2	Year to year hassle
Easily Assessable Difficulty by Average Grade, Homework Load, Class Level, Teacher Feedback	Current scale allows for interdisciplinary equality
Rewards Individual Strengths	Logistically difficult
Harder Classes are Less Punishing for GPA	People have different measures of difficulty